

People Running Through the Streets in Their Underwear? Absolutely!

Not Your Typical 5K

It has been almost 8 years since Katie Couric's bold, on-air colonoscopy brought colorectal cancer into the mainstream media. The Colon Cancer Alliance (CCA) is determined to follow Katie's lead by doing something bold and outrageous to promote screening and save lives.

In 2008, CCA launched a series of 5,000 meter (5K) walk/runs, each called an Undy 5000. These events are designed to draw media attention, give survivors and caregivers a voice, and get people talking about colorectal cancer while raising funds for work in this area.

But, you may be asking yourself, what could possibly be bold and outrageous about these events? Aren't there thousands of 5Ks out there already? Well, this isn't your typical 5K. Participants in an Undy 5000 are encouraged to draw attention to their bottoms and colorectal cancer by running or walking in their underwear. Yes, underwear.

This might mean matching team boxer shorts for some, colorful boxer briefs for others, or even logo-branded shorts for corporate teams. Also, instead of handing out a boring old race T-shirt, our participants receive race-branded boxer shorts!

But Why Underwear?

People don't like to talk about colorectal cancer, but talking about it could save their lives. We need people to talk about colorectal cancer at their doctor's office, around the dinner table, at the grocery store, while waiting in line at the local car wash, everywhere. CCA is willing to do anything to get people to speak out about colorectal cancer. A parade of people in their underwear, in hundreds of towns in the United States, will help us get there.

If you know 18 people, you know someone who will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer. If 200 people work for your company, 11 of them will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer (lifetime risk). And chances are they will have no symptoms and no family history of the disease.

Fact: In 2005, 141,405 people were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and more than half of them were diagnosed in the late stages of the disease.

Fact: According to the Colon Cancer Alliance, 90% of those colorectal cancer diagnoses could have been prevented—that's about 127,000 people in 2005 alone—with just a simple test.

Fact: Colorectal cancer does not discriminate: it affects men and women and affects people of all races and ages.

Fact: The most common symptom of colorectal cancer is no symptom at all.

In 2008, Arizona was selected as one of four inaugural sites for the Undy 5000. The race was held November 15, 2008. A portion of the funds raised was used to provide colon cancer treatment to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured men and women in Arizona who were screened through the Colon Cancer Screening Program administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services. More than 1,200 participants registered for the Phoenix Undy 5000, and \$13,083.66 was given to the Arizona Department of Health Services Colon Cancer Screening Program for treatment. This event encouraged collaboration among many entities, and it was extremely satisfying to see everyone running side by side!

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